

Pent Up Like A Bottle of Pop by Impalallama8432

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Genre: Billy needs a redemption ark in season 3 or I'm suing, Canon-Typical Violence, Enemies to Friends to Lovers, Homophobia, Homophobic Language, Implied/Referenced Child Abuse, M/M, Neil Hargrove Being an Asshole, Neil Hargroves A+ parenting, Post-Season/Series 02, demodogs

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Summary:

"Am I dreaming, or is that you Harrington?" Billy smirked as he sat up, staring Harrington down, because of course it was him. Because there was just something about Harrington that attracted danger.

"Yeah it's me, don't cream your pants." He retorted and stood up, bat slung over his shoulder. "I assume you're looking for Max."

Billy knows he's an ass. He's trying to stop being an ass. But god damn it's hard. One night in the forest, a brush with a demodog and a Harrington later, and Billy somehow finds it easier.

1. Chapter One

Author's Note:

Just a heads up, I am British, so if I write down anything that's obviously not an American word don't be too surprised. Hope you enjoy! :)

Billy wiped away the blood still gushing from his nose with his hand and slammed his forehead into the steering wheel. Where was his little bitch of a step-sister? They had a deal, she told him where and when she was going and coming back. He stayed out of her business. But he'd gone to the nearest garage to buy more cigarettes and when he came back she was gone. No explanation but a piece of paper with one word written on it.

Emergency

He'd expected Neil then. To come storming through the door early for once. What other 'emergency' could be more important? But his father didn't show up until an hour after he'd said he would.

Immediately, he went after Billy. Usually nowadays Billy would tell him where she was, go get her and they'd be back before anyone got hurt. Didn't mean Neil didn't still hit him, just less because of Max. But this time, this time he had no idea where she was. He could lie, say she was at the Wheeler's and then go looking for her, but if he took too long then his dad would know, and he'd get in trouble more than he would if he told the truth.

So he told the truth.

Neil hit him hard in the face, damn near broke his nose, and practically threw Billy out the house to go search for Max.

So here he was. Sat in his Camaro, not knowing where to start.

Well, he actually knew damn well where to start. He started up the car and drove way past the speed limit, but on the empty night lit roads, he doubted anything would happen, even if someone saw him.

Simply nothing happened in Hawkins.

Oh well yeah sure, he'd heard about 'Zombie Boy' and the lab with the chemical leak that killed that girl, but every town had at least one interesting thing about it. Hawkins didn't have anything really interesting, like a serial killer. Or a major drugs bust, or even a family run business that 'ran the town'. It was the epitome of a simple, boring, suburban dream town. Billy scoffed, dream? More like nightmare.

He pulled up to one of those 'dream' houses now, getting out of his car and knocking on the door with his fist, loudly.

Jonathan Byers opened the door.

"Where is she?" Billy snapped at the boy, not bothering to ask or care why he was at the Wheeler residence.

"Who? Nancy?" Jonathan asked sincerely, looking mightily confused.

"No you fucking moron, my step-sister Maxine. She's always hanging out with your brother and Nancy's brothers little group." Billy rolled his eyes, why would he ever be looking for Nancy Wheeler? She was nothing but trouble and pain. Or at least according to Harrington, eyes glassy and fists clenching, whenever her name was mentioned.

"Oh, Max, she was here earlier but she went out with the party, they said it was an emergency." He said coolly, obviously not understanding the gravity of the situation.

"What?! You just let a group of kids leave by themselves cause they said it was an *emergen*-" Jonathan cut him off.

"Oh my god no. You think I'd let Will off alone after what happened? You're batshit crazy. No no, Steve is with them." And of course, of fucking course he is. Harrington. King Steve. Off with Max, *again*, and we all know how the last time worked out.

"Do you have *any* idea where they might be?" Billy seethed. Nails digging into his palms to stop himself from punching the information out of him. He'd been working on that, he'd even made his New Year's resolution to not hit anyone if they didn't hit him first. So far,

it had worked out. He certainly got into a lot less fights. But the anger was building up inside him like a bottle of pop being shook. It was only a matter of time before the lid was pushed, or taken off, and he would explode.

"They're either at my house, or in the woods surrounding, but listen, if you value survival, I wouldn't try and follow the crazy bastards." Billy scoffed, what did Byers know? If he wanted to survive he *had* to follow the 'crazy bastards', no matter what anyone else said.

So he walked away from Byers and got back into his car, not bothering with a seat-belt, and drove off towards the outskirts of town. His knuckles were turning white on the steering wheel, the last time he was at the Byers household, had... Not been pleasant. For anyone involved. He'd beaten Harrington to a bloody pulp, which made him feel weird. Because at the time he just needed to blow off some steam, and there Lucas was, the asshole who'd been hurting Max. And there was Harrington, protecting the little shit and *God* Billy hated Neil. So he imagined it was Neil lying under him, nearly dying. It wasn't, obviously. The drug and the bat had been a bit of a wake up call.

After then, Max explained the Lucas situation and they made their deal. So next time, maybe Neil wouldn't be so angry, and, ergo, neither would Billy. And he wouldn't have to have another pile of guilt suffocate him at night. The guilt he felt for what he did to Harrington was huge, at night, when left to his thoughts, it often consumed him.

However, he simply couldn't seem to apologise. It never seemed to be the right time. When Harrington was happy, he didn't want to bring down his mood by mentioning it. When Harrington was sad, he didn't want to worsen the load. When Harrington was angry, he wanted to avoid a repeat of the fight if he could. So he just didn't mention it at all. Which was probably the worst idea he could possibly have.

When he reached the Byers house, Harrington wasn't waiting outside this time, and all the lights in the house were off. But Billy didn't judge the book by its cover, and went up to hammer on the door. No answer. Typical. He knocked again, louder, if possible. Still nothing but the wind's growls greeted him.

He tried the door, locked. What had Byers the Bigger said? House or woods? Billy turned around and shivered as he looked out into the dark expanse of forest. Out here, without the glow of artificial light from the street lamps he could see the stars, and it just made him feel smaller. Billy didn't like feeling small.

He lit a cigarette, let it dangle from his lips, buttoned up his shirt and grabbed a torch from the boot of his car. Then he went in. At first, he was a little scared, (big, empty forest, small, insignificant boy) but he soon stopped jumping at every shadow that moved.

He kept his ears open for any sound of 'the party', but the only things he heard were the leaves and twigs crunching underneath his feet, the wind growling and the occasional hoot of an owl. There was no clear path to step on either, so he simply wandered around hoping to find something.

It was while later before he had gathered enough courage to start shouting for Max. His voice echoed, cocky and uncaring, even if the rest of him wasn't. No answer. He tried again after walking a bit, but still, no answer. He was almost tempted to go back empty handed, if it meant he had to spend one more second in these bloody woods.

Then he stumbled upon a circular clearing. It wasn't much, maybe four, five meters in diameter. The trees on the edge were the same trees in the rest of the damn forest. There was a shack of to the side, probably used for tools. Oh, and in the centre there was an enormous pile of meat.

"What the fuck?" He whispered to himself, stubbing out his nearly finished cigarette with his foot, slowly moving towards the pile. The wind growled again and he shivered, the air colder. "Max!? What the fuck?!" He shouted that, torch spinning around the clearing, but finding no face, or red hair. The wind growled, and he pulled his leather jacket closer to himself. Fuck Hawkins, why was it so cold all the time? He swung the torch around the clearing once more. Green, brown, green, brown, black flower bud, green, brown... Fuck. That was when he dropped the torch, the wind didn't 'growl'.

The black flower bud, the *thing* came towards him, running on its four legs that had been hiding and opening its flower bud face to

reveal rows and rows of sharp teeth. He didn't freeze, it's wasn't like the movies. Billy ran for the shed, eager to get something to fight with, to defend himself from the, lizard? He didn't know lizards could live in cold places, but then again, it wasn't like he studied lizards for a living.

It was faster than him. It helped that it stopped briefly to sniff at the meat, but it obviously found Billy more interesting, because it didn't stop for long. He'd nearly made it when the thing grabbed his ankle with sharp claws and pulled him down. The bruises from yesterday stung and his nose hurt like a son of a bitch, but it was nothing compared to the pain in his ankle. Where the beast, lizard, whatever it was, had dug it's claws in, and was digging them in further. Billy had learnt to control the pain, but this? He screamed.

As if on cue a man walked out of the woods, his fucking saviour, and calmly over to Billy and the monster. He swung a bat- holy crap, *the bat*, and it hit the beast in it's body. The monster let out an ungodly shriek as it was knocked to the side. The man ran over and hit it several times with his bat, black goo, that he assumed was the creatures blood, covering the mans jeans and soft white t-shirt. It didn't go any further than his shoulders though, so it didn't touch the mans face, or his perfectly styled hair or- *wait a minute*.

"Am I dreaming, or is that you Harrington?" Billy smirked as he sat up, staring Harrington down, because of course it was him. Because there was just something about Harrington that attracted danger.

"Yeah it's me, don't cream your pants." He retorted and stood up, bat slung over his shoulder. "I assume you're looking for Max." Billy nodded, but everything hurt and he cried out, head falling to the ground.

"I still think we should have left him for the demodog to eat. They get hungry just like us Steve!" A new voice. Dusty? Dustin? Something like that.

"Hey, even Billy fucking Hargrove deserves better than to be eaten in the forest. And besides we've been tracking this thing for hours." Harrington walked over to Billy, he flinched. The boy still held the bat, that was now dripping with goo. The last time he'd seen it, it had

nearly taken off his junk, but all Harrington did was roll up his jeans to look at his ankle. "Shit dude. That looks bad. Dustin call Joyce and Jane we need medical and clean up."

"Will, it's Dustin, tell your mom we need medical, over."

"Oh my God, are you okay? Over."

"I'm fine, but Max's brother got bit. Over."

"Where are you? Over."

"Clearing with shack. Over."

"We're on our way, over and out."

"Hey Hopper we need Jane over here. Over."

"Why? You've killed another one? Already? Over."

"Yeah, Steve's a master, I told you. Over."

"Jesus, kid needs to think about joining the force. Where you at? Over."

"Clearing with shack, over."

"On our way, over and out."

"They're coming." Dustin, it was Dustin, said, putting away his radio.

"What the fuck-" Billy broke off into a series of coughs. "What the fuck was that thing?"

"It's called a demodog. Or at least that's what Dustin calls them, the name hasn't quite caught on, but what else would we call them? Giant lizard thingys that want to eat us?" Billy's mind was finally catching up with what was going on. The shock receding and pure fear taking its place. What the actual fuckington fucky fuck was going on?

"Okay, okay what? Where's Max? Is she okay? Jesus christ why are you so calm, a fucking- demodog or whatever just tried to fucking eat

me, how are you- is this a normal fucking night for you crazy fuckers?"

"Pretty much." Dustin smiled. "Although sometimes we play D&D, and most of the time we're done by ten, but tonight they were especially feisty buggers. It was an emergency." Emergency, emergency. Fuck this shit. He could feel the blood spilling out of him.

"Fuck this. Fuck, my ankle." He groaned, closing his eyes. He could hear something scuffling about and then something was tied around his ankle, just above the claw marks. He opened one eye to see a belt, and Harrington belt-less. "At least let me buy you dinner first Harrington." The boy rolled his eyes and then stood up, holding onto his trousers with one hand, and his bat with the other. It was a strange sight. Him covered in monster goo but still managing to look like a princess.

"I'd rather dine with a demodog." Harrington sneered and it was the last thing he heard before drifting off. *Fuck, Neil's gonna kill me.*

2. Chapter Two

Summary for the Chapter:

When Billy wakes up, it's not as if he won't have any questions.

Billy woke up to the sound of muffled voices. He stayed with his eyes shut, unsure of where he was and wanting to keep up the illusion of unconsciousness for as long as possible, to learn as much as he could about his surroundings.

First things first, he was lying on what he could safely assume was either a comfy sofa or bed. His ankle was bandaged up, he could feel the coarse material on his smooth skin. He was warm, for once, and there was red behind his eyelids, so he was either indoors, in a bright room, or had slept til noon, and the sun was beating down on him. Judging by the sofa, he could make an educated guess. Also, there was a flannel on his forehead, keeping him cool.

He could smell something like gasoline, cigarette smoke and pizza. The smoke meant he wasn't at the Wheeler's, no one there smoked. He could be at Dustin, or Lucas' house, but he doubted it. Then again, he could be at his house, but that wouldn't explain the smell of fresh pizza. So it was most likely the Byers.

Lastly, he could still hear quiet voices, but they were very faint. He could also hear a clicking noise, but he discarded that as unimportant. Luckily, Billy knew from years of practised eavesdropping how to pick up on the smallest sound, so he could hear the conversation pretty well.

"- seems to be fine now." A deep growling voice.

"Yeah, but how are we gonna tell him? I mean, we kinda have to tell him now." That was the Wheeler kid, Mike.

"Why don't we just dispose of him quietly? I'm sure no one would notice."

"DUSTIN!" That was Max, and thank fuck she wasn't dead, that one of those things, one of the- demodogs? -hadn't got her.

"What!? I thought you hated the dude?"

"Less so than before. Since the last time he was here, he's changed for the better. And even if I say it, I don't really want him *dead*."

"Yeah, I mean, he apologised to me. That's gotta count for something." Billy *had* apologised to Lucas, unlike Harrington, which was too hard, he didn't know how and when. But with Sinclair he just walked up and said sorry, and that was some of the guilt gone. It had been an honest mistake really, mistaking him for an abuser.

"Listening." A new voice entered the conversation.

"What Jane?" The gruff voice asked gently. If gentle was the right word to use.

"He's listening to us." Billy's breath caught in his throat, fuck. Well, at least he could confirm his suspicions. He opened his eyes slowly, the light hurting them and blinding him for a few seconds, and he groaned.

"Easy princess." *Of course*. "You'll pull your stitches if you move too much." He turned his head to the side and looked at the chair next to the sofa- it was a sofa- and there sat Harrington, still covered in monster bits. He had his bat leaning next to the chair and he was flicking a lighter in his hands (that explained the clicking noise), over and over again, almost hypnotically. Big, brown eyes seemed to stare into Billy's soul.

"Stitches?" Billy managed to choke out of his dry throat. Harrington stopped flicking his lighter on and off and wordlessly passed him a glass of water.

"Yeah, the demodog got you good. There weren't just scrapes Hargrove. There were gashes, the thing damn near tore your whole foot off." Billy remembered the pain he felt and shivered. He was never going out into those woods again if those were normal creatures for it.

"About that. What the hell Harrington? What *was* that thing? Why were you so calm? Why are you *still* so calm?" They were valid questions, so Billy nearly spat out the water he was drinking when all Harrington did was laugh. "Why are you *laughing*?"

"It's just, the same reaction I had when I found about the demogorgen and demodogs and the upside down and Jane... It's funny seeing how alike we are." God if that made him feel weird, because Harrington and him? Couldn't be more different. Billy opened his mouth to say so, but was interrupted by six kids running into the room, a woman he assumed was Joyce Byers, and to top it all off Chief Hopper.

"Hey, are you feeling better sweetie?" The woman (Joyce?) came towards him and took the flannel off his head, placing a new, cooler one there in its place.

"Um, my ankle hurts like a son of a bitch, but I'm mostly confused. Harrington won't answer any of my fucking questions." Billy answered truthfully, shooting glances at the chief, unsure how he was going to deal with him. Sure they'd met before, it wasn't like Billy didn't still get into fights, just only with people who had it coming. It had warranted many a trip to the station, and he couldn't say that the chief was ever impressed with his behaviour.

"What can you remember Billy?" Max asked, sitting on the floor next to him. Her tone of voice was almost patronising, and Billy wanted nothing more than to wipe that soft smile off her face. To punch it off and become the asshole everyone said he was, and they were right. Only an asshole would have such thoughts.

"I remember looking for you, and stumbling upon that clearing, and then that, demodog? That *is* what they're called right? Anyway it fucking shredded my ankle before Harrington and Henderson came to be my knights in shining armour, Harrington beat the thing to a bloody pulp and I passed out after he told Henderson to call Joyce and Jane and that the thing that got me was called a demodog." Max turned and looked at the mismatched group behind her. They nodded and she took a deep breath before telling Billy everything. The others would interrupt her at points, adding comments, and opinions. She told him about Will Byers, and the demogorgen, and Eleven/Jane and the upside down and Jane coming back and the demodogs and the

Mind Flayer and how closing the gate had meant the Mind Flayer's control on the demodogs was gone, but the actual demodogs weren't.

When she had finished, Billy just sat there, unable to say anything. His whole perspective on life was wrong. He'd always known monsters were real, he lived with one, but now there were actual, real life, fantasy monsters. At least it explained Harrington's lack of care for any bad thing that happened to him. He always had worse things to worry about.

"I need a cig." Billy murmured and tore open the new pack that was (thankfully) still stuffed into his denim jacket pocket. His lighter, that was usually in his back jean pocket, was also there, a miracle in didn't fall out in the skirmish. "Do you mind?" Billy remembered to ask, with a cigarette hanging between his lips, reaching for his back pocket, eyeing Joyce, it was her house after all.

"No, go ahead honey, I'd need a cigarette if I was hearing all of that for the first time." She smiled at him. Billy's hand went for his lighter, but *fuck*, of course. Despite the miracle of it staying tucked in his tight fitted jeans, it had obviously been crushed when he'd fallen flat on his ass. In fact his jeans would probably be permanently stained with lighter fluid now.

"*Shit*." He brought out the crushed pile of plastic from his pocket. Damn it, now he had to get a new lighter, but at least he hadn't broken anything important. He was watching Joyce dig around her pockets muttering to herself, when a flame was stuck under his mouth and lit his cigarette. Harrington leaned back, and flipped his lighter closed. In another life Billy would make a smart ass comment, but he was still pretty shaken from the story, so his mouth stayed shut, only turning into an 'o' shape when blowing smoke out. He was still trying to process all the information. It was a lot. He took another drag. What was he supposed to do with himself now? Just continue about his daily life, simply with the knowledge of monsters and scars on his ankle?

No. Billy wasn't the type to just sit down and do nothing when there was something to be doing that was important.

"So." He asked, blowing out a cloud of smoke. "When do I get a bat

like Harrington's?"

It turns out he will never get a bat like Harrington's, but is rather armed with a crowbar, next to the sofa, where he is forced the lie, to let his ankle heal. Billy thinks it's bullshit, they just don't want him in their business. (He doesn't try to listen in again, he'll only hear things he wants to forget.) They're right though, he thinks, if a guy who had nearly beaten your babysitter to death turned up injured on your sofa, you wouldn't really want him becoming part of your team, would you? And if that person was Billy fucking Hargrove, then you must be talking about how to safely get rid of him. Hell, that Dustin kid had suggested *disposing* of him. Billy wouldn't really mind to be honest, he felt shitty enough to die, and it would make everything so much easier. Why *didn't* they dispose of him?

"Hurt." A small voice startled Billy out of his thoughts. A girl- Jane, because he wasn't calling her by the number she was given in a lab, that's fucked up man - stood hovering over him, concern on her voice. Her little brow was furrowed and it looked unbelievably adorable.

"You're hurt?" He asked carefully, unsure what would happen if he was found alone with a hurt little girl, he was already walking on eggshells with these people. But she shook her head, and Billy could breathe a sigh of relief.

"You." She frowned again.

"Yeah honey, the demodog grabbed my ank-"

"No!" She stomped her foot, frustrated. Billy watched as she thought for a moment before her face smoothed out and she pointed to his chest. "You're hurt there." Billy felt sick, surely Max hadn't told them about Neil and his habit- "Heart, in your soul." Oh.

"You mean me thinking about sad things?" Billy slowly said, panic

subdued for the moment. The girl looked relieved, like she was thankful she finally got through to him.

"Yes. You shouldn't be sad. We saved you, and no matter what Dustin says I won't let them throw you out. Joyce won't either." She smiled wide and damn, that was even cuter than her frowning.

"Thanks Jane, that's nice of you." His voice cracked, wow, those claws must have gone deeper than he thought if he was actually showing emotion. Or maybe it was just this little rosy cheeked girl who smiled at him, sat on the floor next to him and watched TV. Changing the channels with her mind because, *oh yeah*, this girl was *telekinetic*.

Probably the former, hopefully the former. Billy couldn't be going soft, now could he? And *shut up*, no, he was *not* stroking Jane's hair with his hand.

Later, not much time later, after an episode of Scooby Doo had finished, Jane disappeared for a minute and came back with two slices of pizza. She passed Billy one and munched on the other herself, before sitting down and resuming her position. It was margarita, Billy would have preferred the meat feast, but his grumbling stomach wasn't picky.

The two of them sat/lay there while the others were off somewhere else discussing Billy's fate. This thought was somehow calming, and what with Jane having gone in and out with pizza every few minutes until they were both full, and the TV playing softly in the background, Billy drifted off into an even sleep.

He'd worry about Neil tomorrow, right now, was the time for rest.

Author's Note:

Please let me know if there are any mistakes in my writing, and please leave a kudos & a comment! The next chapter should be up sometime in the next two weeks